

19 November 1970

Staff Personnel Division DD/S Briefing

1. In considering how best to give you a feel for the Staff Personnel Division as it exists today, I asked myself the following questions:

- (a) What are the mission and functions of the Staff Personnel Division?
- (b) What is the Staff Personnel Division doing?
- (c) Where is the Staff Personnel Division going?
- (d) And what are some of the problems that Staff Personnel Division has today and sees for tomorrow?



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3. What are the functions of the Staff Personnel Division? The overall mission of the Division is to support, monitor and coordinate staff personnel operations of the Agency to help to insure that the right number of the right kind of people are in the right jobs at the right time. This broad, general statement of mission and direction for the Division translates into 14 specific activities. These activities include:

- (1) preparation of the Advance Staffing Plan on a fiscal year basis to

ascertain new input required in professional, technical, communications and clerical employees to satisfy the Agency's needs. In connection with this activity, (2) Staff Personnel Division is responsible for informing the Recruitment Division periodically and on a timely basis of the Agency's needs. (3) We monitor the strength and mix of Agency employees in relation to the needs expressed by the staffing complements of Agency components. (4) We operate the Skills Bank and coordinate the selection, processing and handle the entrance on duty and orientation of new employees. (5) We monitor component career service grade authorizations in relation to the number and level of promotion recommendations submitted by those components. (6) We counsel employees on reassignment questions. (7) We conduct follow-up interviews and pre-exit interviews and the 4 Professional Placement Branch Officers are individually designated as (8) Equal Employment Opportunity counselors. (9) Also we maintain a senior secretarial roster now consisting of 64 employees grade GS-07 and above who have indicated a willingness and desire to be considered for senior secretarial requirements which may occur. (10) We are responsible for the screening, selection, processing, entrance on duty and orientation and assignment of all clerical personnel coming into the Agency. (11) We maintain a continuing flow of correspondence with applicants from the time of their initial contact to the point of their entrance on duty. (12) We provide personnel support to the Career Training Program through participation in the review and selection of Career Trainees, corresponding with and processing those Career

Trainees until their entrance on duty. (13) We prepare special studies for the Director of Personnel. (14) We monitor and approve for the Director of Personnel all personnel action requests submitted by Agency components. These are the major activities which, on a continuing basis, occupy the time and energy of the 40 employees now in the Staff Personnel Division.

4. As an indication of what the Staff Personnel Division is doing in relation to what the Staff Personnel Division is supposed to be doing, here are some graphic demonstrations of the volume of activity which occurs. Our highest volume of activity is in the Correspondence and Applicant Records Branch which transmits approximately 31,000 letters per year to applicants and created in FY 1970, 12,722 applicant files and the previous year, 14,843 applicant files. In addition to that very respectable measurement of production, the Correspondence and Applicant Records Branch continuously removes from its records and

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5. Last fiscal year, the four Placement Officers in the Professional Placement Branch reviewed 10,431 personnel actions and the previous fiscal year slightly more, 10,847. These are appointment actions, promotion actions, reassignment actions, leave-without-pay actions, Quality Step Increases, change of career service designations and others. Everyone of these actions required that the Placement Officers review

the folder of the employee involved to determine the propriety of the action, to insure his meeting qualification standards for the proposed reassignment or promotion, as the case may be. Frequently, Placement Officers are required to consult with the originating component to obtain more information, to remind the component that a current fitness report is not in the record, to request that the component obtain more specific data relative to the proposed leave-without-pay request, to *CSGA activity* question the desirability of a Quality Step Increase recommendation covering performance of only a two or three months period as contrasted to the six months sustained, superior performance required. These are the kinds of activities occurring on a daily basis related to the flow of personnel activity as it occurs throughout the Agency.

6. Placement Officers plan to interview a new professional employee between nine and twelve months after his entrance on duty. The purpose of the interview is to determine from the employee his attitude relative to the Agency and his assignment, to elicit from the employee any suggestions or criticism he may have to offer and finally, to let the employee know that someone in the Agency outside his own branch is aware that he exists and is interested in him.

7. One of the specific functions which I mentioned earlier for which Staff Personnel Division is responsible is the development of the Advance Staffing Plan for the Agency. The Advance Staffing Plan for FY 1970 indicated that the Agency needed to bring on board employees in

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began preparing the Advance Staffing Plan. In October of this year, both the Placement and Selection Branch Officers visited with each component of the Agency to discuss in detail that component's attrition experience, any planned increases and finally the estimate of their needs for the fiscal year. The goal of the ASP is not to come up with a statistical picture of experience equated to estimate as it is to enable the Agency to have some idea of what we think at a given point in time our estimated needs are and to let the recruiters know that. Also the face-to-face discussions of this subject in detail by Office of Personnel representatives with components outside the Office of Personnel is an education process for both parties concerned.

9. For so long as the Agency is overstrength, there is a need to know where this overstrength is by component and by kinds of people. We are receiving now a monthly report from Statistical Reporting Branch giving a breakdown of professional, clerical and technical employees. As of 30 September, we knew that we had 331 more professionals in the Agency than we had positions. On an Agency-wide level the difference between clerical positions and clerical people is one; positions excluding 137 in TAS. On the technical side, we have 50 more technical people than positions. When this information is brought out by directorate, we can see the proportionate relationship between directorates with regard to professional, clerical and technical employees. In graph form, the difference between the numbers of employees on board in these

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categories as compared to numbers of positions appears very small. However, our latest report of 31 October shows Finance with 20 clerical vacancies, RI with 17, and others with 5 to 12 vacancies. At the same time, we now have 20 clericals in TAS awaiting assignments. At this point in time, one of the things which seems to be occurring is the continuation of clerical vacancies to offset professional overage elsewhere. The reporting mechanism to receive this kind of mix of employees is brand new. The identification of positions and employees is still subject to refinement and as we acquire more information and more knowledge of these specific areas, we hope to be able to better monitor and help components achieve at least a closer relationship between professional employees and professional positions, clerical employees and clerical positions and technical employees and technical positions.

10. Another factor which may develop after continuing experience with this review is a serious question as to whether or not a component needs to retain clerical positions if they can in fact be left vacant for a period of time without detracting from the component's overall output.

11. Another of the functions which I mentioned earlier that is performed by Staff Personnel Division is the coordination and processing of applicants up through the point of EOD. We initiate requests for security clearance and medical clearance. This chart demonstrates the relationship between the number of people for whom we requested



12. These activities which I have been discussing and describing demonstrate what the Staff Personnel Division is doing and indicate to me that the work of the Division meets the requirements levied on the Division.

13. Now where is the Staff Personnel Division going? In what areas will concentrated effort be made? What additional activities will be undertaken? On 2 November, the Staff Personnel Division assumed from the Benefits and Services Division responsibility for the pre-exit counseling phase of handling voluntary resignees. The rationale for this action stems from the fact that the Placement Officer is in frequent and direct contact with the components which he services and is in some contact, even if remote, with the employee beginning with the day the employee entered on duty when he is briefed by the Placement Officer, nine months later when he has a follow-up interview with the Placement

Officer, and throughout his tenure in that component the Placement Officer reviews his fitness reports, signs off on his promotion recommendations and reassignment actions. It is logical, therefore, for the Placement Officer to participate in the man's departure from the Agency to round out his picture of activity in the component. The prime purpose of this pre-exit counseling is to make an effort to get to the resignee before he becomes a resignee, to determine his reasons for thinking about resigning and if it is determined that we should retain him, make every effort to find a suitable assignment for him elsewhere. In February of this year, the Executive Director indicated to the Director of Personnel that ceiling restrictions demand that internal assets be considered to meet Agency needs before external recruitment is implemented. Until or unless we can get to these people early, we will make no headway in salvaging employees who are lost to the Agency. We are fully aware of the fact that most employees interviewed will have already committed themselves by the time of the interview and it will be too late to salvage them. We are fully aware of the fact that many of the employees who leave the Agency should not be considered for reassignment elsewhere. Nevertheless, an unknown number at this time of good, solid, salvagable employees do leave the Agency. These are the ones we want to get at.

In the foreseeable future, SPD will become more actively involved in the follow-up interview program in that if the initial follow-up nine

months after the employee enters on duty is meaningful and worthwhile but equally, if not more meaningful and worthwhile, would be a follow-up interview at the three-year point in the employee's career. By that time, he will have been here long enough to have learned something about the Agency and will have been in a position to have thought in the direction of either making a career with the Agency or not making a career with the Agency. The potential for identifying and preventing problems should be as great, if not greater, at the three-year point than it is at the nine month point. We also recognize in the follow-up interview concept that unless very carefully handled the interview itself can imply a greater capability for satisfying employees' desires that we actually have. My primary purpose in talking to the three-year employee would not be to invite him to consider reassignment on the assumption that we might reassign him but rather to again reaffirm the Agency's recognition of his existence as an employee, to give him an opportunity to talk to someone outside his own branch and to elicit information from him which would give us a clue as to whether we are going to have a potential resignation on our hands at some future time.

15. We are strengthening the standards for clerical employment for a number of reasons. Until last year, the Agency has historically operated in a condition of demand exceeds supply. It still does require some recruiting effort to locate and recruit the clericals per year

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which we use but now the supply is greater and the demand is less. By strengthening the standards, we hope to reduce the turnover some. We have already reduced the amount of time spent in refresher typing and shorthand training in the Temporary Assignment Section. Until recently, it was not unusual for an employee to remain in TAS for 9, 10 or 11 weeks working toward meeting the typing and shorthand standards. Now only in rare exceptional instances does an employee remain in TAS longer than 6 weeks. Indications from Agency components lead us to conclude that the quality of clerical employees is higher than in previous years. Because the demand is now down we have modified the provisional clearance factor for TAS to this extent. The recruiter should not invite the employee to request EOD on a provisional clearance but should encourage the employee to wait for full clearance before EOD. In those instances in which the applicant is strong in all respects and cannot afford to wait for full clearance and there is a high probability that we will lose her if we do not bring her in on a provisional clearance, we can and do bring some applicants in on a provisional clearance.

16. The Staff Personnel Division is again up to its ears in ceiling controls. The work which we have done with components in the development of the Advance Staffing Plan and the continuing monitoring of component strength will enable us to respond to such requests for assistance as may be needed to meet the 30 June 1971 ceiling target.

17. What are the problems in Staff Personnel Division? First, a practical problem. The reassignment capability of the Staff Personnel Division is limited to the extent of our ability to persuade a component chief to accept an employee from on board rather than to recruit an employee from outside the Agency. In this area at least two problems exist: the employee¹ who comes to us seeking reassignment or are referred to us rarely have anything to offer another component other than the will to work. He has knowledge of the Agency based on his length of time which he has been employed but in the case of the communicator, this knowledge is not translatable nor of interest to the area divisions of OCI who are looking for area specialists. The 54-year-old Clandestine Service officer who can no longer satisfy CS requirements is not at all attractive to DDS&T, DDI or DDS. On the other side of the coin, the component chiefs are not as receptive as we would like to reassignment referrals. The fact that the employee is being referred is all too often interpreted as a negative action and it is assumed there is something wrong with him; otherwise, he would not be under consideration for reassignment, and in many cases this is true. Either the employee is disillusioned in his old position or the component is disenchanted with him. We can, based on our knowledge of component requirements and component receptivity, make an intelligent judgment after review of the man's background and an interview with him whether or not there is a reasonable opportunity for his reassignment.

Therefore, I am inclined in the direction that unless we feel there is a reasonable opportunity to reassign the individual, we should not refer his file to various components which simply results in our having a record that the file was referred and the component would say that it had no suitable vacancy. The components are now in an ideal position to say their on duty strength versus ceiling preclude their accepting anyone. A contradiction occurs here because in examining our staffing needs for the fiscal year, components have said that we need ~~300~~ ^{APPROX} ~~professional~~ employees of various kinds. If the Office of Personnel controlled the EOD of new employees to the extent that this would occur only after a certification to the effect that no suitable employee on board was available for the position, this might contribute to the ceiling problem, ~~contribute to the solution of the ceiling problem~~ and could result in satisfactory reassignments for some employees.

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